

THE LEISURE HOUR

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Courper.*



IN THE HAREM.

THE STORY OF A DIAMOND.

CHAPTER III.—THE BRIDE'S VISITORS.

ONE day while Zeynab was amusing her idle hours by turning over her jewels, a European visitor was shown in by the black slave who specially belonged to her. Madame Bianchi was of Italian race, but a Levantine, that is, born in Alexandria, where her father had held some petty situation; she was married to a doctor who had some practice among his countrymen and natives, and had managed, in spite of intemperate habits, to scrape up some fortune. In the enlargement of pecu-

niary gains his wife proved a good helper, though she could not economize, and spent on tawdry dress and expensive amusements as much as he did in wine and spirits. She was equally or more ingenious in gaining money wherever an opportunity occurred.

By her knowledge of the vernacular Arabic, and a tolerable smattering of Turkish, she was able to act as interpreter to foreign ladies visiting in harems, and to Orientals when shopping in the Frank quarter of the city. She talked the worst Arabic, certainly, being destitute of the power of reading in that language; but she had fluency and tact, and knew how to flatter the weaknesses

of the childish females she dealt with, and made herself so popular among many of them that she obtained a considerable number of jewels, silk dresses, and other things, either as gifts or as bargains, by exchanging things of inferior value for them, profiting by the ignorance of the sellers. This personage had heard of Zeynab, my present owner, as a recently-married damsel, of wealthy family, and very young and ignorant. She gladly took advantage of her acquaintance with an aunt of her husband's in Boulac to call and see what could be gained from her.

Madame Bianchi was a tall, stout, sallow-faced woman of no particular age (that is, one could not determine whether she were thirty or forty), but she had very particular eyes, if I may use the expression, for on her entrance this feature instantly attracted notice. They were large, keen, prominent eyes, the whites—which, strictly speaking, were not white, but of the colour of bad ivory—forming so important a part of the whole organ as to give a bold, inquisitive, and uncomfortable expression to the countenance. Her dress would take too long a time to describe; but a comic painter might have made a good picture of it. In common with many persons brought up far from European civilization, and with hardly any education, yet thinking it necessary to adopt the latest Parisian fashions, or what they foolishly imagine to be such, she wore an assemblage of colours fit only for the plumage of a macaw: blue feathers, scarlet ribbons, yellow gloves, etc., were all displayed with intense satisfaction and pride, as she came into the room, simpering and saluting the Egyptian ladies, with a mixture of Eastern and European gestures and phrases.

Coffee and pipes were brought in, and the Oriental Frank, as I may call her, proved an adept in the use of the latter. She then commenced her attack on Zeynab's jewel-box, by flattering the poor little bride in the grossest manner, and especially praising her ornaments, till she had gained a sight of all the treasures. She took the kurs or tiara on which I was fixed into her hands, and admired it excessively, but at last began to make a suggestion of some alteration in the arrangement of the diamonds.

Now, as, for want of anything better to do, the Eastern ladies are very fond of having their jewels altered, and set in various forms, this excited no surprise: and after a great deal of talk it was decided that a change should be made.

"You will have to take out one of these diamonds, my beauty," observed the wily Frank visitor, "because this shape requires one less; but you can set it in a ring or an ear-drop, or sell it for some of those fine silks I was telling you of."

She was interrupted at this moment, to her great annoyance, by the entrance of a slave announcing another visitor. The English gentleman's wife whom the husband of Zeynab was accustomed to transact business with occasionally, had called to pay her respects to the ladies of the family. Never having before seen a harem, she was very desirous of making her salutations to Sitt Zeynab. Such was the message, as I afterwards heard it; but only a bungled portion reached us, as Madame Bianchi, with a disconcerted face, stopped short in her voluble speech, and a gentle, graceful young woman, of perhaps four or five-and-twenty, entered the room. Her extremely simple dress seemed like a suitable frame to a pretty picture. You noticed nothing in particular, but its quiet hues set off the delicately-coloured cheek, and glossy dark hair, and slender figure, which formed so striking a contrast to the last-comer.

Her stammered compliments were not perfectly intelligible to my owner, but her natural good breeding and gentle, yet lively and open-hearted manners, won their way, as she said—

"You will hardly understand my bad Arabic, I speak so little yet. I want to learn your language so much; but it is hard."

Zeynab's mother-in-law smiled, and patted her hand approvingly, and Zeynab said—

"This lady will be your interpreter: she is very clever, and talks quite well."

Mrs. Rothsay—for so the young lady was called—looked rather doubtfully at the Levantine, whose bold face did not please her; but after she had exhausted her stock of phrases, and when she found that, instead of assisting her by endeavouring to find out what she wished to say, and supplying words, her hostess (like all semi-barbarous persons) sat perfectly silent, or else shrugged her shoulders, and said, "We don't understand," with a helpless giggle—when Mrs. Rothsay found it came to this, she was fain to accept the services which were almost forced on her by Madame Bianchi.

"I can speak for you; only tell me in Italian, or in French, if you prefer—all are alike easy to me." For, concealing her annoyance at having been interrupted in her bargain, she was outwardly all friendliness, though, by a few side remarks to the Egyptian ladies, she contrived to make them understand that English people were good for nothing in general, and were all infidels without exception.

The jewels were admired and the respective dresses of each country commented upon, and then Mrs. Rothsay asked if any of them could read.

"She asks if you can read!" cried Madame Bianchi, laughing loudly; "no, truly, Arab ladies don't read."

The French and Italian, and even some English residents, are wont very incorrectly to style all speakers of the Arabic tongue Arabs; even Christian Egyptians are so called.

"I am so sorry," said Mrs. Rothsay; "you can't think how the time would pass if you could read: it would make you happier, perhaps, in a way—"

She stopped abruptly; for, being quick of observation, she noted the slight hesitation in the Italian's manner, and it struck her that her words were not being faithfully interpreted. Moreover, though her knowledge of Arabic was very small, she did know something, and her modesty had made her speak so disparagingly of herself that they all thought she was more entirely ignorant than was really the case; and she caught several words which showed her Madame Bianchi was not to be trusted, and which none of the party guessed she understood. Under these circumstances it would have been wise, as her husband afterwards told her, to have given up the bright hope of doing good, which had made her so anxious to visit the harem. But she was young and ardent, a bright and happy Christian herself, and full of zeal that others might share the blessings of the Gospel, and she forgot that by too much haste, or by an indiacret way of bringing forward the truth, we may not only fail of doing good, but shut the door against future opportunities.

She knew the Italian to be a Romanist, if anything, and more than suspected her of trying to prejudice the ladies of the harem against her; yet she could not resist the desire of making a desperate attempt at all risks, thinking she might not get admission again. So in her own broken Arabic, aided by very expressive looks of sympathy and interest, she tried to explain that, not

being aware they could not read, she had brought them a present of books, and begged the young bride to ask her husband to read, at least some of them to her; and as she spoke she produced a little packet, in which were a New Testament and two or three simple tracts in Arabic.

"My husband will not read to me; he will laugh," said little Zeynab, tittering as she spoke.

She was but twelve years old, remember, and was a mere child in appearance and manners, while, from want of cultivation, her mind was below that of an ordinary English child of eight.

"Laugh! that he would," echoed the mother.

"And, besides," added Madame Bianchi, "they don't want your books: they are Mohammedans. Do you understand?" she continued, in a rude tone, throwing off her assumed politeness: "they are Turks."

For, in common with many Levantines, she used Turk as the name of the Moslem faith, and not as belonging only to a certain race.

Poor Kathleen Rothersey was puzzled; for, though a good Italian scholar, she had no idea of this use of the word "Turchi."

"Don't they understand Arabic, then?" she meekly asked. "Surely you would understand these if your son read them to you?" she continued, showing her parcel to the mother.

"Certainly she would, but they do not wish for Christian books," interposed Madame Bianchi; "did I not tell you they are Turks? Go away with your stupid books! All the English are infidels," she added aside to Zeynab; "they don't believe in God."

The ladies all drew back very coldly on hearing this, and vain were Mrs. Rothersey's efforts to regain her friendly footing with them. She had no means of making herself properly understood, and besides, the prejudice had been instilled, and could not easily be removed, even if she had been able to speak. So, sorely vexed and discomfited, she took leave as courteously as possible, but with a heavy heart under her smiling face.

Not for another hour did the wily Italian depart, and when she withdrew I also left the harem for ever: she had succeeded in persuading Zeynab to sell me to her for a sum of money and a quantity of French silks, which she declared were as new as they were certainly handsome, rolling up her eyes as if they must jump out of her head in her asseverations. But for all that they were old articles, as she triumphantly informed her husband on her return home.

It was a comfortless abode: the vice of the European dwelt there—love of strong drink. Better the dark den and money-loving talk of Ismael, or the childish quarrels of little Zeynab, than the home of Bianchi and his wife, full of deceit, fraud, drinking and gambling. I will give no account of the few weeks I passed there, for they would entertain no one. Before long I was set in a ring, in order to be sold to more advantage. M. Bianchi wore me on his finger, in order to attract a purchaser by my lustre, but refused two or three offers, hoping to make a better bargain. One day, however, he was riding along the banks of the river on his way from a friend's villa, where he had partaken of too much wine, and I dropped from his hand; the hoop of the ring chancing to be rather large, and he not being in a state to know his loss at the time, I was lost to him for ever.

CHAPTER IV.—THE TREASURE HID IN A FIELD.

How long I remained half buried in the dust I cannot tell—it may have been for weeks—but one day a fellow, or Egyptian peasant, happened to cast his eyes on the ground just as a ray of light striking on me revealed

the fact that something shining lay half hidden by a scanty tuft of grass before him, and in a moment he had stooped down and picked me up. "Mashallah! what is this?" he exclaimed aloud, in his delight at such unexpected good fortune. "Blessed be this day for ever! how little did I suppose such luck awaited me when I left home." So saying, he concealed me in a pocket of his blue cotton tunic, and hurried from the bank of the river towards a grove of palm-trees at a little distance. These palms now stood on dry ground, for it was winter, and the inundation had entirely subsided even in these low lands, and the young green corn and clover, plantations of tobacco here and there, as well as beans, melons, etc., grew luxuriantly around their stems. A few buffaloes were tethered among them, watched by ragged children, and several flocks of sheep and goats wandered in the open spaces between the groves, their shepherds clad in white bernouses, the hoods usually drawn over their heads, the dark eyes and shaggy beard just appearing, and their sunburnt-arms and legs bare. About a quarter of an hour's walk through this region brought the finder of the hidden treasure into a little village of a rude description, only two or three of the habitations being large enough to merit the name of houses, properly speaking. One of these belonged to the sheikh of the village, who was seated at his door, smoking his pipe in the pleasant rays of the afternoon sun (it only wanted half an hour to sunset); he looked up as my new owner approached, and said, "Why, Hassan, what makes you look so merry to-night; what has happened?"

"By your father's beard, O sheikh, I fell asleep, and had a good dream by the river side to-day," replied Hassan, without the smallest hesitation.

"And what might the dream be?" inquired a young man, who was leaning against a palm-tree that was built into the sheikh's house, and formed a support to it on one side.

"I have no time to tell dreams now—I am hungry," said Hassan, proceeding on his way in spite of the laughter which followed him; and presently he reached a hut, whose clumsy wooden door was kept open by a stone, and where a woman of middle age sat nursing an infant at the threshold, while two older children were rolling in the dust beside her, with a kid, a puppy, a little donkey, and a buffalo calf, and seeming to be on equally friendly terms with all the party.

"Why are you not preparing supper?" asked Hassan, as he immediately squatted down beside his wife.

"Fatmeh is gone for the water; it is still early," she replied.

"You say that because you are lazy; look at the sun."

"I lazy?" retorted the woman, rising as she spoke, however, and commencing her operations. "No one in the village has so active a wife as you, Heaven be praised." She put the baby on her husband's knee, and, hastily collecting a little heap of fuel, arranged it against a ledge or little wall of dried mud, and kindled a fire; and then took up a basketful of some green leaves, which she cut up small, and thrust into an iron pot. There was a strange mixture of slovenliness and grace, and laziness and activity, in the way in which Khudra (so I found she was named) performed her evening duties. She never stood when it was possible to sit, and would draw a vessel towards her with her foot rather than get up. She looked languid enough with her limp blue skirt, and black muslin veil, all ragged at the edges, dangling into her basket, till at last she got out of patience with it, and fairly flung it over her shoulder. But somehow her delicate brown fingers got through their work more

nimbly than one expected, and the silver bracelets jingled on her round arms as they moved dexterously to and fro. Fatmeh, a slender tripping girl of eleven or twelve, had meantime come up, with her pitcher of water poised on her head; and, quickly lowering it at her mother's desire, she filled the iron pot, and began to assist in peeling onions to add to the stew, which was presently on the fire. She then filled her father's pipe, and relieved him of the baby, of which, however, he seemed very fond; it was quite unwilling to leave his arms, and made a desperate clutch at his vest as Fatmeh endeavoured to hoist it on to her shoulder, and by so doing jerked something out of his inner pocket, which fell on the ground before Hassan could catch it.

"Oh, father, a ring! a ring!" exclaimed the delighted girl, and her mother almost upset the pot into the fire in her eagerness to scramble across to see what was the matter.

"A diamond!" she cried. "Ah, my husband, you are the son of good fortune; holy prophet! what luck is this?"

"You foolish woman, hold your peace if you do not wish me to beat you," said Hassan, sternly; "be quiet, you little donkey, or I will fetch my stick," he added, frowning at Fatmeh, who was beginning to dance, saying in a sort of chanting voice, "My father has found a ring; oh, the ring, the beautiful ring!" She ceased at his threat, however, and began meekly to assist her mother in pouring out the soup into an earthen bowl, and distributing flat loaves of tough, dark-coloured bread to the children; for some of the neighbours had begun to gather round them, and they perceived that it was not very prudent to boast of the treasure so loudly. Several voices inquired what was the matter, and one asked what ring they were talking of. Hassan, however, told them he had had a dream about a ring, which he would relate next day; and by this falsehood, which did not appear to hurt his conscience at all, he got rid of them. The family ate their supper in silence, and almost in darkness, for the short Egyptian twilight had set in ere they commenced, and in a few minutes this had given place to the shadows of night. The dying embers of the fire just served to show Fatmeh where to place the one dish which had been used for supper, after she had cleaned it, by wiping the inside with her fingers, and then licking them, and to light her father's evening pipe.

Though only six o'clock, the village was beginning to settle into quietness; the younger children were already asleep, and the mothers dragged them into the huts, and rolled them on the mats which served for bedding. The evening was mild, though it was December, at which season the nights are beginning to get cold in general. A bright moon was rising, and peered through the softly-waving palm branches, as Hassan settled himself on a fallen palm-tree outside the hut, and in a low voice related to his wife, who was hushing her infant beside him, the history of his finding the ring, exhorting her to silence at the same time. Presently, however, a group of young girls came near, skipping like young deer in the moonlight, and singing, in the chanting voice so often heard in Egypt, about "fortunate Hassan," and a ring worth a thousand purses.

Fatmeh's tongue had betrayed her father's secret to her companions, it was clear, and the whole village would be soon pestering him with inquiries. He soon dispersed the chatters by laying his stick pretty smartly across his daughter's shoulders; but to stop their tongues was not possible, and the murmur of voices became every moment louder, as a traveller, apparently of a respectable class, and of a pleasing counte-

nance and manner, rode up to the group which had by this time assembled round Hassan's abode, and, dismounting from his ass, begged to know if it were possible to procure a boat to take him to the opposite side of the river. "I have been detained later than I expected," said he, "at a village yonder, where I was disposing of some books, and now I fear I can hardly reach the city to-night."

"Books! what do the fellaheen want of them?" said a rather churlish-looking old man; "Hassan, here, has got something better; hold the lamp, brother, and show the stranger your ring; perhaps he can tell us its value. Do you know anything of jewels, sir?"

"A little," replied the traveller; "but let me hear if I can get a boat first. I suppose there is no one here who could give me a lodging?" he added, for he well knew that the Egyptian peasant, though by no means wanting in hospitality in the daytime, is very rarely to be induced to admit even an acquaintance, much less a stranger, into his hut at night. In fact, the accommodation is not of a very desirable kind for persons used to anything like comfort.

"We have no room for strangers; our houses are small," replied Hassan, hastily; "but my boat is not far off; we can get it ready in a short time and take you across."

In his own mind Hassan was considering whether it would not be a good plan to stay on the opposite bank, sleeping in his boat, and then proceed to the city to dispose of his treasure at an early hour; for he was afraid that the villagers would spread the report, and that, possibly, the owner, or some one pretending to be such, might come to claim it. He wished he could have rowed the stranger over alone; but the current was strong, and needed the aid of his comrade, especially as it was night. They set forth accordingly, the younger man going on before to prepare the boat; while Hassan and the traveller, whose name, he told them, was Yacoub, walked more leisurely through the grove towards the bank of the river. Hassan was not wanting in acuteness, and he perceived from a very few minutes' conversation on the most ordinary topics that his companion was a man much his superior in education and in knowledge of the world. He asked him, therefore, about the merchants in Cairo, and learned from him who were the most likely to give him a fair price for his treasure. He confided the whole story of finding it to Yacoub, saying, "I told those donkeys yonder that I dreamed of a ring at first, to quiet them; but my silly women talked, and told every one that I had really found a jewel; and now, how can I tell but that some one will accuse me of having stolen it? God knows I never stole a farthing. I am an honest man. Truly women are good for nothing, but to do mischief with their tongues."

"Why did you lie about it, my friend?" asked Yacoub, gently.

"As I said, to conceal my good fortune, which was necessary."

"Do you not know that lying is a sin, as well as stealing?"

"No, sir; every one lies: it is needful sometimes, but stealing is wrong. Listen, and I will tell you how it was. God and the Prophet know I do not lie now, for I see you have sense. I was walking in the field of cloves down there by the river, and just cast my eyes on the ground, when I saw something bright, nearly hidden by the tuft of grass under which it lay; quickly I picked it up, and, by the way in which it stuck in the earth, I am certain it had been there for weeks, perhaps months."

"It was a treasure hid in a field," said Yacoub thoughtfully.

"Without doubt, sir. How many had passed in that very field, and yet they knew not of the jewel that was hidden in it!"

LETTER-WRITING.

Few among the improvements of the present day have been so fruitful a source of pleasure as the penny post. If we go to its foundation—railway conveyance of mails—we shall, of course, see that that foundation has been still more instrumental in affording convenience to the public than this, its offshoot or outgrowth; but we will keep, at present, to letters and their free circulation.

The pleasure of the penny post, however, is not unalloyed. The incessant rat-tat of the postman is anything but music in some ears. Those who are quite willing to let the world alone, if the world will be so obliging as to let them alone, knit their brows, and shrug their shoulders, as the Queen's-headed documents follow them into their privacy and break their quiet.

Mistresses are apt to complain that their servants are now always writing or reading letters. Mothers wonder (out loud) "what Emily can be so continually sending off sheet after sheet of crossed note paper to Selina, and Sarah Anne, and the other score of her late schoolmates and acquaintances." They who are short of time are often heard to say (when they expect nothing of interest by post), "No letters? I'm very glad; then there are none to answer!"

But the bright side of the shield is broader and taller than the dark one. For one heart that "shuts up" at the moment of morning delivery, there are many that open wide; and in characters in which hope is strong, every letter is welcomed, even though on opening it may be found to contain nothing but a wine merchant's or a dressmaker's advertisement, or, worse, unpleasant news of some distant friend, or, worse still, a requirement to meet a bill!

Generally speaking, those who are obliged to stay to take out their glasses and clear them before they can read are apt to think also before they rejoice. They weigh the chances of good and evil, and, if they have known much of disappointment, are prepared for the best or the worst, and bear with philosophic calmness whichever comes.

But, passing over the opinions, the liking or disliking, of our present postal arrangement, it is a fact all will bear witness to that letter-writing since the advent of Queen's heads, has greatly deteriorated, and that, in proportion to the ease of the transmission of letters, they have lost in matter and in manner.

We of this age can remember when a letter from a distant county cost eightpence, ninepence, tenpence; and we can also remember that, knowing the value of eightpence, ninepence, tenpence, care was exercised that the writer or the person written to, whichever had the postage to pay, should not suffer by having to pay for nothing. Consequently, there was a list made before writing of things that ought to be said, and it was well studied, and the family were consulted as to whether there was anything else to be said to Mrs. Jones, or to cousin John, before the letter was sealed, as "it wouldn't do to have to write again." Not an inch, nor half-inch, of the paper was lost; the flaps (letter-paper was the article then) were duly covered, and the piece beneath the seal had its "last words."

How is it now? Take an example.

"I want you to write to Mrs. Thomson, to tell her about the bazaar," says Mrs. Smith to Maria.

Maria writes.

"You wrote to Mrs. Thomson, Maria?"

"Yes, mamma."

"That is right. Of course you gave her all the particulars?"

"Particulars?" says Maria—"what particulars? I told her we were going to have a bazaar."

"But the time; did you tell her when?"

"The time! Oh, no; I forgot that. But it doesn't matter—I can write again;" and she does.

"You wrote again to Mrs. Thomson, Maria?" Mrs. Smith says.

"Yes, mamma, I told her all about it."

"You told her Lady Vaughan had promised to take a stall, and that she would stay with us, so we couldn't take her and her daughters in, as we should be so full."

"Oh, no, I didn't; you didn't tell me, did you?"

"No, but common sense might have taught you that. Now, you must write again, or she will quite expect to come to us."

Maria writes again.

"Mamma, does it matter? I forgot to say that aunt Emily will keep room at the Rectory for the Thomsons if they will go there?"

"Certainly, dear; let her know immediately. It may determine her to come," Mrs. Smith says.

Maria writes a fourth time.

And Mrs. Thomson writes to ask what the real precise object of the bazaar is, how much money is wanted to be raised, what sort of articles are most likely to sell, and where it is to be held, as Maria has given no information at all on those points.

"You told me you had given all the particulars," Mrs. Smith says; "and, now, read this, Maria."

Maria reads it, and says, "I must write again; never mind, give me the letter, and I'll answer everything as it comes."

Is this an exaggeration? By no means; there are many Marias who, in writing ten letters for one, pay a tenpenny postage, and waste half a quire of paper into the bargain.

The loose, slipshod style of doing things so prevalent in these days is not more exemplified in any other thing than letter-writing; and it is pleasant to look back into the past and read the grave, full, and interesting records of facts, feelings, and thought that were considered worthy of sending from friend to friend, and were received with respect, and read with deliberation and study.

Take this that follows, selected from many, as a proof of this. In the year 1583, on the 3rd of June, wrote a father to his daughter, a young lady who, in the London of that day (which would be simply intolerable to the young ladies of this day), found such attractions as to be undutifully bent on remaining there, instead of returning at his and her mother's desire to her country home. She had gone there to keep her unmarried brother's house; and, when he married, and her services were no longer wanted, she was summoned to return to the duties she had left. But "Mistress Mary Eyricke" could not make up her mind to leave the place of "strange delight" to a country maiden, who, according to Lord Macaulay, or, rather, to his authorities, was (with her class of the wives and daughters of country gentlemen) "below a housekeeper or a still-room maid of the present day in tastes and acquirements. Unoccupied by other things, they stitched and spun, brewed gooseberry wine, cured marigolds, and made the crust

for a venison pasty." Such things were not palatable to her after she had revelled in the charms of a town existence, at a time when "Chelsea was a village, and cattle fed and sportsmen wandered with dog and gun over the site of the borough of Marylebone; and when poets loved to contrast the 'solitude of Islington' with the din and turmoil of the monster London. Then, too, in place of the present bridge a line of irregular arches, overhung by piles of mean and crazy houses, and garnished after a fashion worthy of the naked inhabitants of Dahomy, with scores of mouldering heads, impeded the navigation of the river." Yes, before the Great Fire had destroyed those "narrow lane-like streets, which obliged even princesses to ride on horseback, being unequal to allowing carriages to pass each other;" before "Bloomsbury Square arose to be one of the wonders of England, which foreign princes were carried to see;" and when "St. James's Square was a receptacle for all the offal and cinders, and for all the dead cats and dogs of Westminster"—so delightful was London at that time to Mistress Mary that she, either directly or indirectly, gave her parents to understand that she would not—could not leave it. Good Mr. Eyricke knew his duty, if she had forgotten hers, and sent her, not a flippant "come home," not a sharp remonstrance, to be followed up with reasons in future letters, but a firm protest, a tender expostulation, a plain exposition of her sacred obligations, and a wise reminder of the advantages presented by obedience, all under one seal.

It may be premised that Mr. John Eyricke was one of an ancient family, now represented by George Heyricke, Esq., of Beaumanor, in the county of Leicester, and that this letter, with many others, is to be found in Nichol's elaborate account of the family in his "History of Leicestershire."

Here is the letter:—

"Daughter Mary Eyricke,—I have me comed unto you, trusting that yee bee in health, with your brother Nicholas and his wife, and your brother Wm., willing youe to have me comed unto them, and likewise to your brother Hawse and his wife, and to your brother Holden and his wife. Your mother and I do daily pray to God to bless youe, and all the rest of your brothers and sisters. I pray youe shewe your brother Niccolis that your mother and I doe gyve hym harty thanks for his tokyn that he sent unto us by White the carryer, and for all his other good tokyns. Mary, the cawse of my writing to youe nowe ys to will youe to come down from London with your brother Robart. I have willed dyvers tymes your brother Robt., yr brother Stanford, and Ric. Payne to have brought youe donne, but you wold not, wiche I marvell of. Youe were obedyent at our desyre to go to London, to keepe youre brother's howse when he had nede of youe. But nowe he, beyng married, may spare youe. He is very sory that youe shold take the pains that youe doe; but he tellis yure mother and me that youe will neds do soe. And like as you weir obedyent at my desyre to go to London to kepe his hows, and nowe he having no nede of you, your mother and I doe will youe to cum donne with your brother Robt., you ought to be obedyent unto us now, as you weir at your going upp, and not only then and nowe, but at all tymes, as you know by the comandment of God you ought to be, and lykewisse you be bound to be obedyent to your parents by the lawe of Nature, and by the lawe of the realm. We wold be loth and very sory that you shold be fond dysobedyent to us, or stubborn. We doe not send for youe for any yll purpose towards youe, but for

your comfort and oures. We doe not sende for youe to work or twille about anny busynesse, but to oversee my howse, and doe your owen worke, and have a chamber to yourselfe and one of your sisters to bair youe company. I thanke God, all your brethren and sisters do shoo themselves obedyent to your mother and me, and in so doying they doe but their dewty, and God will bles them the better for it. I pray youe, let me not fynde you contrary to them, for yf youe doe, yt will be a grait greffe to your mother and mee in thees our old dais, and be an occasyon to shorten our dais, which cannot be long; but greffe of hart and mynde wille shorten lyffe, as deyly experiens doth showe. Thus I leave to writ anny more to youe, willing youe to remember yourselfe whethar you have done well or noe, in that you refused your mother's request and myne, in that youe doe not cum, so often as we have desyred youe.

"We myght have comanded you, but we have desyred and praid youe, and you refews to be obedyent. Nevertheless, your mother and I doe dayly pray for youe, and desyre of Almyghty God to bles you, and all the rest of your brothars and sisters.

"At Lester, the third of June, 1583.

"JOHN EYRICKE."

"Ah!" cries Maria, as she skims over the letter, "dreadfully dull. Of course it is very wise, and so forth, but you would expect all that from *old* people!"

True, Maria; but, though "foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child," "young men and maidens" are expected to have their proper share of good sense, and to show that there have been those among them who have proved their possession of it in their letters. Read again—but first hear something of the writer:—

"Mistress Margery Brews, daughter of Sir Thomas Brews, of Flinton Hall, in Salle, and of Topcroft, was asked in marriage by Master John Paston, who appears, from his letters, to have been a mean, selfish, and covetous man, and very unworthy of the pure, maidenly constancy and affection of the young lady. His wooing was several times on the wane, and seemed at length to threaten to end—when she, much moved, it would seem, by the possible rupture between him and her father, writes to him with artless eloquence, which if it did not go to his heart, proved plainly that that heart wore a base armour of gold.

"To my right well-beloved cousin, John Paston, Esq., be this letter delivered.

"Right worshipful and well-beloved Valentine,—In my most humble wise I recommend me unto you, &c., and heartily I thank you for the letter which that ye send me by John Beckerton, whereby I understand and know that ye be purposed to come to Topcroft in short time, and without any errand or matter, but only to have a conclusion of the matter betwixt my father and you. I would be most glad of any creature alive, so that the matter might grow to effect. And theeras ye say, and ye come and find the matter no more towards you than ye did aforetime, ye would no more put my father, and my lady my mother, to no cost nor business for that cause a good while after, which causeth mine heart to be full heavy; and if that ye come, and the matter take to none effect, then I should be much more sory and full of heavynesse.

"And as for myself, I have done, and understand in the matter that I can or may, as God knoweth; and I let you plainly understand that my father will no more money part withal in that behalf, but an £100 and 50 marks, which is right far from the accomplishment of your desire.

"Wherefore, if that ye could be content with that good, and my poor person, I would be the merriest maiden on ground; and if ye think not yourself so satisfied, or that ye might have much more good, as I have understood by you afore, good, true, and loving Valentine, that ye take no such labor upon you as to come more for that matter, but let *what is* pass, and never more to be spoken of—as I may be your true lover and beadwoman during my life.

"No more unto you at this time, but Almighty Jesu preserve you both body and soul.

"By your Valentine,

"Topcroft, 1476-7."

"MARGERY BREWS.

If John Paston was not affected by "let what is pass, I will be—nevertheless—your true lover and beadwoman during my life," he was one not to be envied; and when Margery became his wife, which she did, it may be feared she was not always "the merriest on ground."

Let it be remembered that this letter was written nearly a hundred years before Mr. Eyricke, when the education of women—young women especially—was as inferior as the difference of civilization between the two dates will suggest.

Shenstone says that the style of letters should not rise higher than the style of refined conversation. This is a good rule for manner; and in the *Essays of Temple* we have this remark, "Writing can never be good that is not easy;" but it does not follow that all easy writing is good—it may be easy, but very insipid; and when you begin to suspect that your writing is easy, but wants spirit, the wisest thing you can do is to let your pen drop, and go to bed.

Undoubtedly, matter is more important than manner, important though it be; and if we must dispense with good in one of the two, we should choose the latter.

But many are called on occasionally to write letters merely out of policy, or form, or civility, or kindness, when, in truth, they have nothing to say. It is hard to tell whether they or their correspondents are more to be pitied; but even such letters, with a little painstaking, might be made worth reading—something worth writing having been found.

Those who can write fluently about nothing are generally the most amusing, but not the most satisfactory, correspondents; they go on writing to please themselves, as they talk who love to hear themselves talk; and it happens at times that they have the pleasure to themselves. They who have not the ready art, but are in pain from the date to the signature unless they have business or facts of some kind to state, if dull, are not impertinent. One thing is to be noted in the letters of olden times, and that is the strain of piety running through them; there may be as much feeling of this kind among letter-writers in these days, but the expression is seldom made. It is pleasant to see how (seldom writing) the writers generally committed each other to the "keeping of the Holy Trinity," or prayed "Jesus have you in his blissful keeping."

There is a good deal of this solemnity of olden times in the letters of the rural poor, as is well known by those who interest themselves in the homes of village life. A mother writing to her son in distant service begins thus:—"My dear boy, I hope this will find you in health, as it leaves us at this present, thank God for it;" and she gives him good scriptural advice, charging him to "remember his Creator in the days of his youth;" and gives him accurate information of the being and doings of his brothers and sisters, of the news of the village, and, above all, of his father, and how they look for him

to be at home at the feast, etc. The spelling is by no means first-rate; in fact, somewhat corresponding with Mr. John Eyricke's, but it is readable, and the lad it is meant for finds it legible enough, and is not at all put out by a little *i* for *I*, nor for any other substitution of the kind. Such a letter, indeed, takes long to write; it is brought out day after day for a week or more, to be carried on and finished. Maria could write a score at least while it is about, but then (without offence be it said) it is worth, when done, more than Maria's twenty, and twenty more besides.

There are three varieties of letter-writers, in adverting to whom, holding them up as friendly warnings, this stricture shall close—they are the "spinners," the "prossers," and the "randoms."

The Spinners are most ingenious; as the sun makes a thousand stars or rainbows by one ray passing through a fragment of glass, so the spinner brings out sentence after sentence, each of which pleases as you read it, but, at the end of the last page you find there has been but one thought or fact in the whole, and that as, in moving the glass, the stars and rainbows vanish, so in burning the letter you lose everything in it: no more remains on your memory than remains of the prismatic colours on the blank wall.

The Prossers are the reverse. They are full of facts; but they write about them in so tiresome a manner that they bewilder and weary, instead of informing and satisfying. They dwell with as much prolixity on the state of the weather, or the health of the family, or some trifling incidents connected with yourself on which you would like information if briefly given, as they would on a revolution, or any other national event. You read on, longing for the end, skipping as much as you can, though the facts, small as they are, are acceptable, and lay down the paper, glad that the bore of reading is over.

The Randoms—Maria is the type—she shall be spared any more criticism than this: they seldom date their letters. If they do, their figures being very much alike, it is difficult to make them out; so when they make appointments and say "to-morrow," or "this day week," they perplex by giving no distinct note of their "to-day."

There are numerous volumes of letters published which these three classes of writers would do well to read as directors in the art; but, as Margery Brews wrote so well with no other helps than her head and her heart, both doing the very best towards composing her letter, this ought to be sufficient in the present day. And it is not too much to say that if all who wrote letters (not on business, of course) would be as diligent in the use of their powers, there would be much paper and disappointment saved, and abundance of pleasure given.

ON THE NILE.

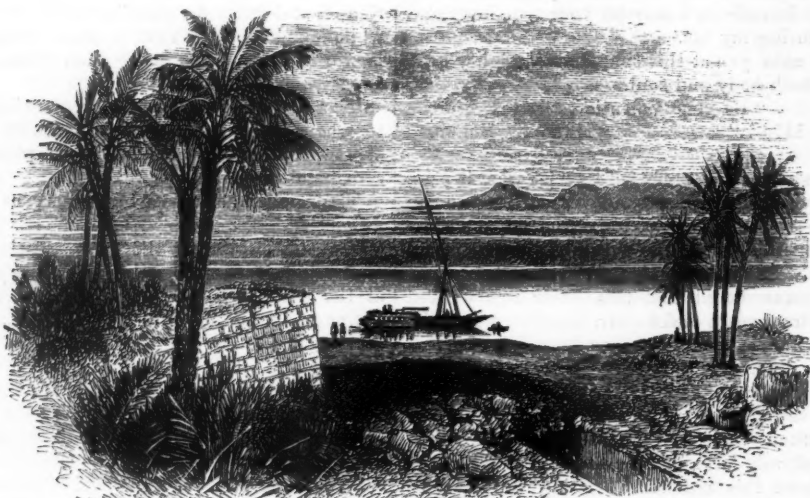
CHAPTER XVIII.—PHILE.

WE spent a night in one of the inner sanctuaries of the temple of Isis, at Philæ, much to the bewilderment of a family of bats located there, in whose select society, and in that of sundry light-robed gods and goddesses, the silent and solemn genii of that dark chamber of imagery, we whiled away the hours. It came about in this wise.

We fell in with some old friends at Syene, who had preceded us up the stream, and whose dahabeeyah we found moored in advance of our own. They had arrived at the limit of their travel, and were bent on descending.

"Our boat," said these gentlemen, "is too big to mount the cataract, and we do not care to charter a kangia for the two hundred miles to Abou Simbel; so we intend giving up Nubia. Philæ, though, must not be missed, and our dragoman tells us we can hire camels and make

buy!" Dusky nymphs of the border land these, graceful as Echo, who had baskets of woven palm leaf for sale, ebony clubs, arrows curiously tipped and barbed with iron, war spears, daggers, shields of hippopotamus hide, silver rings, all of rough native industry.



VIEW FROM PHILÆ.

a circuit through the desert to arrive there. We mean to take our cook and plenty of supplies, you know. Will you join us?" We agreed.

And so, early one fair morning there came a troop of camels from under the palms, who settled down on the busy shadow-flecked shore of Syene, ready to take us off;—camels caparisoned with barbaric splendour, gorgeous in many-coloured trappings; holiday camels, vainglorious, fussy, full of importance, gurgling and spluttering with great inward discontent—peevishly, and with a funny show of old maidenish superciliousness, jostling past the donkeys, and glossy-skinned Nubians hanging about the boats. They finally tucked their legs under them, and subsided in the dust, fretful, however, and vaporous still. The Syene bank was cumbered with a medley of merchandise, brought by caravans from Senaar, in charge of wild, fiery-eyed, beetle-browed Arabs, and shot down to be shipped on the stream. Elephants' tusks, sticking savagely out of rough buffalo-hide packages, like colossal bulbous roots half sprouted; bales of odoriferous gums, bound up with twisted palm fibre; ostrich feathers, ebony, senna—littered at random among the sundry hulks and ghastly lank-ribbed skeletons of defunct kangias, bleaching high and dry up the slope—crowned the coast, and in fact constituted a kind of Tom Tiddler's ground, where little sunny striplings, swarthy boys and girls, in the joyous freedom of nature's undress, were romping and picking up the gold and silver of happy childhood.

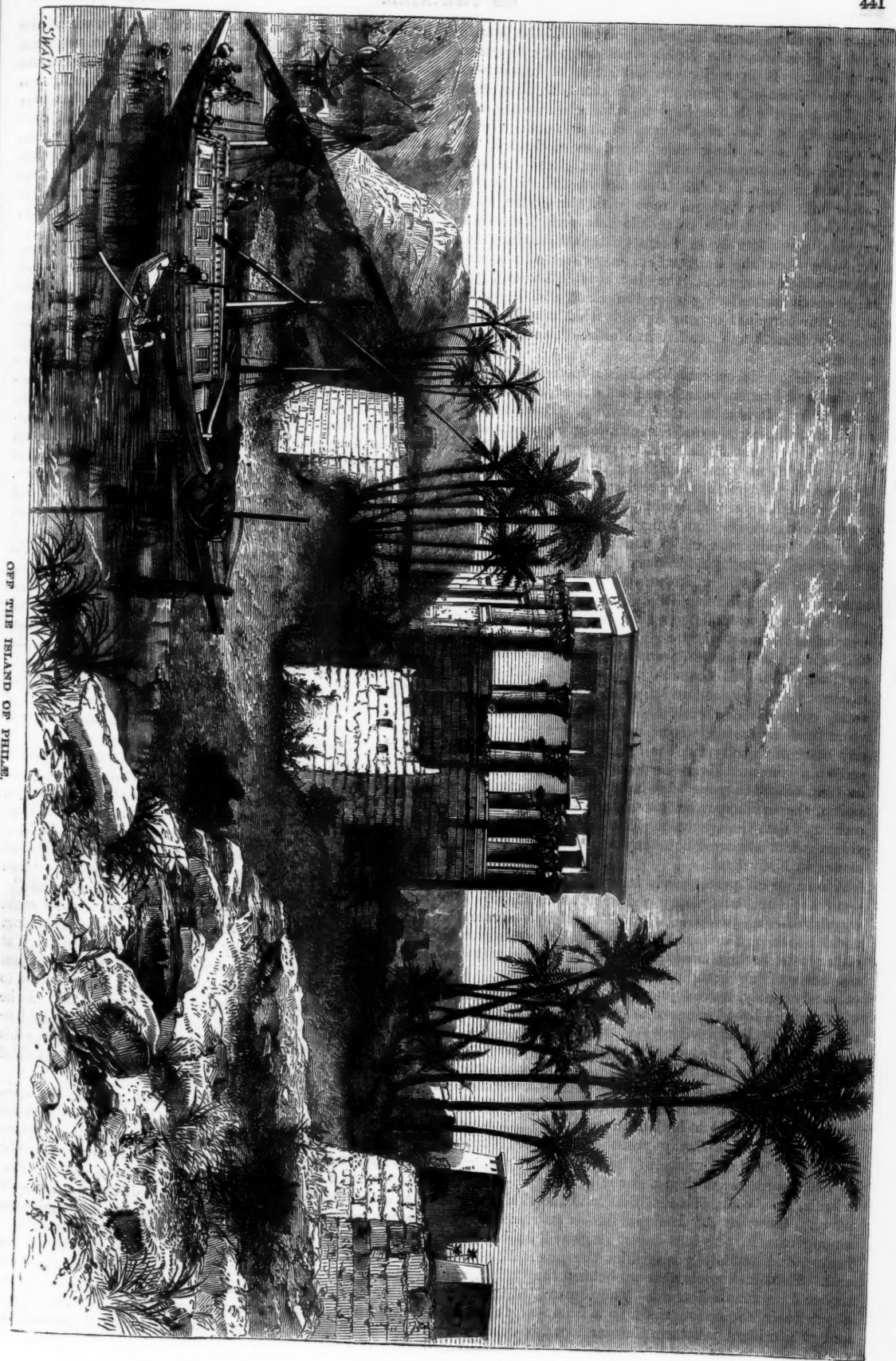
Such was the scene we surveyed while breakfasting upon our upper deck. Flocks of the vulture tribe, planing above us in the balmy morning air, eyed hungrily each mouthful we ate, and poised themselves ready to pounce down on any crumb cast into the stream. Beneath, on tiptoe, on the river's marge, there stood a group of Nubian maidens, reaching up eager arms and shouting, "Buy, buy! O Howagee,

Their big black eyes and white teeth glistened as, bending over the bulwarks, we took up one and another of their chattels to examine. Among other curiosities we bought specimens of that characteristic article of female attire,



COLONNADE AT PHILÆ.

the *vahah*—a costume far too light and airy for our northern climes, but pretty enough and becoming to



OFF THE ISLAND OF PHILIP.

these,
palm
d and
hippo-
nstry.

ding
their
ught
ttire,

our
to

these swarthy lissom-limbed children of the south. Young girls wear the *raha* until they are fourteen or fifteen. It is a cincture or fringe of leather—a short petticoat of a thousand thin strands. The most dandified of the lasses load it with glass beads and cowrie shells, that tinkle and chatter as they walk along. This is their sole dress, save, indeed, an unguent of castor oil, which, they say, keeps the skin soft and supple. Bah! it is an abomination, that castor oil. The villages reek with the odour of it. The natives, otherwise comely in face and limb, often excite disgust simply in virtue of that anointing; for, dripping from the hair, where every one of the tiny plaits which surround the head is saturated, you may see it meandering over the skin, and becoming a harbour for dust or any foulness that may be afloat. Happily, insects will not live in Nubia. The climate is too dry.

Your first ride on camel-back is a memorable event. Racked and broken, your bones feel out of joint for days afterwards. It is a lesson of humility. Bow and bend to each swinging step of the camel, and you come off pretty fairly; but if obstinately you persist in sitting bolt upright, as most beginners do, woe betide you! The novelty of the situation and wayside scenes passing in rapid succession will deaden the fatigue at first; but soon the smart, as from a fiery finger, creeping up and down the spine will make you shrink and shift into every possible position for ease. The camel is the only quadruped who still walks and trots in the "long since exploded or antediluvian fashion" of advancing his two near legs and two off legs alternately—a trick, by the way, of which most picture-makers seem to be oblivious. This gives him a lurching motion from side to side, like a rolling ship. The camel's walk does not jolt you, for his broad, spongy feet, which seem made for the desert sand, come down silently and softly; but it tires you more than his trot. It is no easy matter to mount with any show of dignity, for the kneeling beast picks himself up a joint at a time—he seems made up of joints!—so that, although your legs have good hold round the post of the saddle, you are shot backwards and forwards, and fancy that the operation will never terminate. Some riders affect stirrups, but they are about as useful as skates in Kaffreland.

We came off pretty fairly in our desert ride to Philæ—no accident, but plenty of ludicrous mishaps. Our way lay through a defile, where the offshoots from the rocks bounding the horizon pressed in like a rampart on either side, broken here and there by rugged rifts and ravines opening broadly into the hills. It was a kind of sandy valley, barred just then by the slant shadows of morning—broad zones of bright glow and deep gloom alternating. Rocks of rose-colour grew up about us, rocks of green, red rocks, rocks of violet and bronze, huge cliffs of syenite, beds of volcanic basalt, big boulders of porphyry—a wild and savage path, utterly barren, vocal, though, now and then, to the primitive music of some caravan, which hailed through the lengthening vista, saluted, and lazily passed on, to the tinkle of camel bells and the minor of the Bedouin's song.

There were more than a dozen of us in all—our four friends, their cook, Haroun, Saïd, and the sheikhs of the party. We went off in single file—a fashion *de rigueur* among camels, who in a desert stage will tacitly elect a leader, and, politely giving him the *pas*, follow to the end. Saïd had to clamber up behind the Caliph, much to our dragoman's disgust. They quarrelled in the way about their respective right to a hump of the saddle, and at a critical juncture Haroun lost his seat. Very

bitter of soul was he at this lapse of dignity, which the gentle "chaff" of a sheikh, unhappily too near, rendered the more poignant. He fired up frantically, cuffed the boy, cursed his beard (Saïd's chin was smooth as a girl's) and the beards of his progenitors, and was proceeding to further extremities when Saïd lurched over and went rolling in the sand. That appeased his enemy. He rode on and cooled down fitfully, while the boy lay on the desert bellowing like a buffalo. Saïd was not hurt, however; he got on his feet, ran forward, and very nimbly climbed up the camel's tail, sailor-fashion, settling himself humbly in the rear.

But our friends' cook cut the most ludicrous figure. He was a Maltese, lanky and lean as Don Quixote, crowned jauntily with a red tarboosh, and accoutred up to the teeth with the ship's *batterie de cuisine*. Pots and pans hung variously suspended about his saddle, in close fellowship with several live fowls, a leg of mutton, and a goose. A number of more precious things, too—brandy flasks, sandwich tins, sketching materials—were festooned gracefully about his person, so adding much to the picturesqueness of his make-up. The man quivered and rattled all over at each lurch of his "desert ship." Poor fellow! he was an artist of considerable merit, a man of mark in his own kitchen. But here, sitting bolt upright on so uncertain a pedestal, he did not—to put it mildly—show to advantage. We could hear him groaning under this novel dispensation. I fancied more than once he would come to grief, for the leader camel, startled by a serpent or some passing reptile, would at times break into a trot, which, communicated to the rest following suit, so effectually dislocated and entangled our friend's implements of office, kettles, fowls, and gridirons, that he was obliged to stop the caravan to rebuild his castle.

These little escapades, however, served to put the Caliph in good humour. The never-forgotten feud of race was sure to crop up. Haroun never missed a chance for a fling at the Maltese.

"Wallah! look you, sar!" shouted he to me—my own seat, by the way, was rather uncertain—"look you! Mister Cook he dance about like an earthquake; ya, ya, dat not good for you, Mister Cook! You see, sar, camel no like him; no like Maltese kitchen." And the fellow, apparently half killed with laughing, would hold his sides and make funny pretences of falling off. "You no get dinner, sar; him too frightened to boil kettle."

Haroun was, I fancy, the only one of us who could afford to crack jokes. Smith, naturally enterprising, tried it, but came signally to grief. He was as much at sea on camel-back as the best of us; but, taking warrant from his unquestionable horsemanship, he presumed to lecture his neighbours on desert "equitation," as he termed it, and proceeded to show how it should be done. And thus, while he was figuring away on his saddle, he unhappily lost hold of the post, and tumbled down ignominiously.

However, we came safely to the end, and the Bedouins, who in the way had been showing their paces as Bedouins love to do—galloping their camels, poising their spears, girding in their fluttering garments, shading fiery eyes to descry a fancied enemy on the horizon—now ordered a halt; for, debouching from the defile, we had come again to the river—were drawn up on its brink—and before us, across the quiet water, loomed Philæ.

Across the water, islanded as in a sea of glass, it rose up, airy and dream-like, as a delicate fantasy of the brain. An amphitheatre of wild rocks girdled it in—cliffs and granite headlands, that at respectful distance grew sheer up from out the stream. Unreal it seemed, and

fairly built; for not a soul dwells on the island, and all around was so hushed and lonely that you might have taken it—temples, colonnades, green sunny slopes, and all—to be some delusive mirage that hung trembling in the lustrous noontide air.

We dismounted in the midst of a little Nubian hamlet, where the huts, half buried in drifted sand from the tawny desert, were nestled among black beetling rocks at the head of the cataract—a village hot as a furnace, and swarming with children. It was a good sling's-cast from Philæ. Some of the native rustics indolently rowed us across; for the village owned a tub of a boat, about as ancient as Argo, and of a primitive build. Evidently it was not often taken from its moorings; for such as were not amphibious of these people paddled about on a whisk of douira straw. We saw boys and girls very cleverly riding these hobby-horses from island to island. Although the river here was tranquil as a tideless sea, we could, as we glided over the spell-bound waters, catch the muffled thunder of the torrent hard by, and through passing vistas of rock discover fugitive glimpses of the seething falls. After landing, we deposited our cook and his pannikins in one of the deserted courts of the great temple, there, amid the shadow of those stately pillars, to kindle his fires and make ready for the feast. We also bade Haroun clear out one of the inner chambers for a dormitory; after which, with all due seriousness, we set to work to explore the island. We took the inevitable red hand-book with us, and all in the broiling sun wandered forth from terrace to terrace, from temple to temple, from slope to slope.

And now, what shall I say about this Philæ? How choose in these brief limits what of its history to tell? Philæ, from earliest time, was the Holy Island, set apart for the solemnities of Isis. Osiris, so fabled, lay buried there, and pilgrims from afar journeyed to catch sight of its sacred shores. Hither came Plato, Pythagoras, Solon, Herodotus—perhaps Moses. Hither, in the far back time, those priests of royal Heliopolis, allied to Israel's son by Asenath's marriage. The august of the earth, in fact, flocked to Philæ—some, pilgrims of beauty alone; some, to worship; some, to learn.

The Greeks, faithless to their own gods, and captivated by the witcheries of its sweet story as by a pleasant song, called it "The Beautiful," and swore, "By Him who sleeps in Philæ!" The island was sacred. The priests, the choirs of maidens, the servants of the temple, had it all to themselves. Their joyous festivals were never troubled by the too near approach of the profane. Tranquil were their days, their nights full of repose. Never, save at the great yearly solemnity of the crowning of Osiris, were those bronze gates rolled back which gave admission to its shores. Few, and only the great, trod that marble stairway which, laved by the tide, ascended in gleaming degrees from terrace to terrace, to land the visitor in the precincts of the temple.

But, from the adjacent islands, or from boats on the river, the outer world must have seen much that was passing. Through breaks in the palms across the tranquil waters, through vistas of colonnade or terrace in the sunny stillness of noon, glimpses might be got of shorn priest moving hither and thither amid the shadows of the temple courts; or, when the day closed in, while the pomp of the western sun burnt a deeper crimson on the blazonry of pillar and architrave, and lit into seeming life the legion of sculptured figures crowded on wall or column of some hypæthral chapel open to the sky, of high pontiffs gathering around some altar, whose smoke was slowly wreathing up into the tranquil

evening air. Then, in the days of festival, what show and pageantry, what scenes of intoxicating splendour, what solemn mummeries in those dark chambers of imagery! The austere virtues of the elder time had died out with its simpler worship when Philæ was in its glory. The loftier lessons of Old Egypt were forgotten. All that still remained of its wisdom, its pre-eminence in learning, was in the gift of the priests. A gorgeous ritualism enslaved the multitude. Like children in the night, they shaped spectres out of the darkness and fell prostrate before them. The dim religious light, the brilliant procession, the impenetrable veil were to them a feeling. Religion was dulled into deceptive emotion. Thus sacred Philæ became the centre of an æsthetic and idolatrous worship. It was crested with temples, brilliant with symbols of the mystical Isis, whose motto darkly declared "None among mortals hath ever lifted my veil." Wall and column bore the effigies of Isis the Mother, the mild and tender mother, nursing Horus, her infant son—a very counterpart, by the way, of the Romish Madonna—and also of the dread Osiris, now buried, but hereafter to rise again and become the judge of all.

To them all the pageantry and ceremonials bore witness. Their emblems rose aloft in the long-drawn procession—insignia of gold that burnt and flashed in the rays of the sun. Stately and solemn indeed must have been that show! There were flamens and pontiffs, robed and mitred, passing from altar to altar. There were ranks of atrienses, servants of the goddess, free of the porch, but not admitted into the penetralia. And, as a dazzling stream, moving on to the cadence of sistrum and harp, through atrium and portico, through pictured corridor and sculptured hall, now seen, now lost—moving on beneath the cold, stony glance of the Egyptian sphinxes, reposing each in awful stillness side by side, passionless, impenetrable—there were troops of fair young damsels in the trappings of the goddess. Their painted forms still look down on us from the wall. They were clad in snowy garments, light and clinging, cinctured with a jewelled band. They had thick wavy hair clustering about their shoulders, interwoven with a wreath of lily blossoms, or crowned with the brilliant plumage of some wild bird. Fresh flower garlands or necklaces of beads and golden amulets hung on their bosoms; precious rings clasped their rounded arms, and in their hands they carried the symbol-wands of Purity and Truth. In such guise, beneath the stern, inscrutable glance of the sphinx, this youthful troop swept on in harmonious movement. Alas for the pleasant vanities of earth! Alas for the contrast! For soon with them the wine-cup would be shattered; soon the garlands would cease to bloom. But ages have passed, and the sphinx is still there, reposing as ever in thoughtful beauty, serene and solemn as of yore. Ah, if those pouting lips could be unloosed, what strange mysteries might he unravel!

DISILLUSION;

OR, MARY OF THE MILL AND THE COUNTESS MARIA.

CHAPTER VI.

GEORGE passed his examination, and came to take a final leave of his friends at the Mill before he went to the University. The miller's wife had begged him not to come before. Nothing was said of Mary, or of the betrothal, and both the mothers seemed to have tacitly agreed to prevent, if possible, that the two young people

should be alone together. On the part of the miller's wife this arose from conscientiousness, but on Frau Rau's part from a secret hope that George might do better for himself.

The miller had spoken very plainly to George about his money matters, and had rather wounded his self-esteem. "Your mother's affairs are all in confusion; no one can say whether anything will be left to her or not, so I will advance what is necessary for the present. Not because you have spoken about my daughter—I do not wish to sell the child—but because your father was my good friend and comrade, and fully trusted that I would take care of his son. You will have three hundred gulden (about £25) every six months; that must do for everything—an enormous sum," muttered the miller, to himself,—“and I will pay no debts. You must first pay your professors, and you must give them what they ask; I think that gentlemen of their standing will not overcharge a poor lad like you.” George bit his lip. “Then,” continued the miller, in his statement of necessities, “you must lay aside all that you want for board and lodging.”

“And attendance?” interrupted George.

“Now what does a young man want with attendance? I know a student who cleans his own boots, and brushes his own coat before a holiday; but I will not suppose that you would do that. With regard to clothes, if you are fitted out well at first you will not want anything new yet. You will have to buy yourself a few books, although I should have thought that people learn for the sake of knowing what is in the books by heart. What you then have over you can use for your own pleasure, and now and then you can have a holiday. This sum must include all expenses; many people have to keep a wife and child on six hundred gulden a year (about £50); you must not waste anything. People say that four years is necessary for studying medicine,” continued the miller, who took the morose silence of his ward for full agreement. “I will consent to that time, although the money is a large sum; but I shall not regret it if you learn something, and if you do not play at cards or drink to so great an extent as the other students do. ‘The first time that you have played at cards,’ my father used to say, ‘go home and be ashamed of yourself for being so stupid, and not having anything better to do; but if you have played a second time, and you feel an inclination for card-playing, go at once and insure your life, that something may be left for your wife and children.’”

“But I have not to provide for wife and child yet,” interrupted George, whose patience could hold out no longer. “You have not yet,” said the miller, with imperturbable calmness, “but what you do from your youth up—whether you waste your substance in sin and foolishness, or whether you are industrious and upright, and preserve soul and body, in honour—you have done that for wife and child, even were your future wife not yet come into the world; and you will find it out some day, with bitter heart-sorrow, or with thankfulness and joy.”

While the miller spoke, George was leaning against the window. Mary was standing among the late autumn roses and hollyhocks, and seemed half-hesitatingly to pick a bouquet, while she now and then raised her eyes, and cast them down again, when she met George's glance. “For the sake of that pretty little daughter,” thought he, “I can bear a lecture from her father, even though it be rather wearisome.”

“Now, as we are talking of the subject,” said the miller, in conclusion, “as far as the child is concerned,

my wife wishes nothing to be said about it, because you are both so young. The child shall be well educated and taken care of, so that she will make a good wife for any honest man. When you have thoroughly learnt your profession—you understand me; not before—and can earn your own living, if you still wish for her, she shall be yours, even if ten richer men came to claim her. In the meantime, there must be no nonsense and no letter-writing between you. Now, may God preserve you, and may you become an honest man.”

Late at night, while the miller was still down-stairs, and his wife had laid herself to rest in the old four-post bed, Mary came in softly: “Mother, I said good-bye to George alone on the island; was that wrong?”

“Did you ask him to come over?”

“No, mother; but I saw that he was coming, and I saw, too, that you did not like us to be alone together; but you did not forbid it, did you, mother?”

“No, child; what else did he say?”

“He took the bunch of flowers which I had put down in the garden, and then he found a forget-me-not by the brook, and gave it me, and said that I must not forget him, and that he would always think of me. Mother, may I keep it?”

“Keep it, in God's name, child; put it in your Bible, and when you look at it and think of George, pray that God may keep him pure and holy. Give your heart to God, and then it will be a precious treasure, whether you give it to George or not. Think of the text which I chose on the day of your birth: ‘Behold the hand-maid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word;’ make that prayer from your heart. Lay your heart and your future in God's hands, and not into the hands of man, even the best of them. Good night, Mary.”

And Mary put the forget-me-not into her Bible, confided her heart and her future to God, and went to rest in peace.

However precise the directions may have been with which the miller had dismissed “his student,” on whom he prided himself not a little, he let him depart on his new career with unlimited confidence. This confidence, and the consciousness of being the only son and the future support of a widow, acted as a restraint on George, so that he did not allow himself to be carried away too far by his new student life, and by the attraction of unbounded freedom. He found the division of money which the miller had advised rather difficult; he did not confine himself to one glass of beer, as advised by the old miller, and quieted his conscience by the thought, “He does not understand much about it; but if I keep out of debt, and pass my examination creditably at last, the rest is my own affair.”

He did not forget the fair child with her soft brown eyes; it was not that she hovered before him as a prize to be won by toil and labour—no, he considered her his own already—but his fancy painted her to him lovely and charming; more so, almost, than she really was, as is the case with most young lovers.

If sometimes he good-humouredly took part in his comrades' rough games, it did him good to have his own secret thoughts to himself. At that time romantic friendships were very uncommon amongst young men. The enthusiasm of the old time of the war had died out, when comrades in arms were companions in every secret of life. So George had no confidant for his love. He did not write at all to Mary, and very seldom to the miller, who was not very clever with his pen: but whenever he wrote to her mother, he sent greetings; books, or some little remembrance, to Mary.

CHAPTER VII.

FRAU RAU was on the point of leaving home. She had sold the farm, and wished to go and live with her sister, who kept a hotel in a thickly populated commercial town. "I shall have nothing to do with the business, of course," she assured the miller's wife; "only now and then I shall have to entertain the more distinguished guests; but I cannot, remain here, as grief is wasting me away."

"Do it, in God's name," answered the miller's wife, who could perceive but few traces of this wasting grief. "I should be troubled and distressed with a sorrowful heart in such a busy place."

"I shall have my own room," continued Frau Rau, "and there will be plenty of time to be melancholy in the evenings, when there is no company. Dance-music is certainly often disturbing; but that takes place only once a month at the Casino."

"Should you not have preferred to settle in a University town, and make a home for George?"

"You must know, Christine," said Frau Rau confidentially, and with some degree of condescension, "on the one hand, the income which I receive from the farm is not sufficient to maintain a household in the style in which I ought to live; and, on the other hand, I have heard that the noblest and richest among the people are thought nothing of unless they are professors; and I could not stand that at all."

Frau Rau had gradually become reconciled to the thought of regarding the charming little Mary as her son's future bride; particularly when her eyes had been opened to the modest condition of her own circumstances. But she earnestly reminded the miller of his duty to do something for Mary's education, and asserted that the amount of learning she had received from the schoolmaster and his wife was quite insufficient for the position which she might one day occupy. "if my George does not change his mind." "Or our Mary," answered the miller's wife, rather sharply, in spite of her usual gentleness. This was a suggestion of a kind no mother would allow.

The miller, who wished that his Mary, the very apple of his eye, should be quite perfect, and a truly desirable possession, agreed with Frau Rau; and her mother was obliged to yield, though she felt an undefined horror of the capital, and of "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world," into which a young girl must be sent to be polished and finished off.

Young ladies' schools were at that time the exception; but Frau Huschwadel, a business friend of the miller's, who lived in the capital, knew of a respectable widow, who engaged to give young ladies a good education, and at the same time would insure them maternal guidance and supervision, and opportunities for French conversation; it was therefore decided to give Mary into her charge.

So, notwithstanding many secret sighs from the miller's wife, an experienced dressmaker was brought into the house, to fit out Mary for her residence in the town. The miller hired a carriage from the "Sun Inn" at the village, and the parents, in their best Sunday attire, accompanied by Christian, brought their treasure to the town, and confided her to the care of the estimable Frau Riederich:

Frau Revisor Riederich was what might be called a strong-minded woman; she had bravely taken up arms in the battle of life, and up to this time had always gained the day. Life had never gone smoothly with her; but she had never complained. Her character was neither cheerful nor melancholy, and she belonged neither to

the complaining, the sentimental, nor the resigned class of widows—she was simply strong-minded. She had early been left an orphan, and had learnt to fight her way amongst strangers; but she had done her duty everywhere, and had not allowed herself to be imposed upon. The spring-time of life, with its love, hopes, and dreams, had been unknown to her; she was only a kitchen herb, no garden flower; cabbages have no month for blooming.

Late in life she became housekeeper to the invalid Revisor Riederich, and he had raised her to be his wife. She had gratefully acknowledged the honour, and had taken upon herself the dignity of housewife in the same way in which she would have entered on a new situation, and had always proved herself a faithful and self-sacrificing servant and attendant to her husband. She held his memory in honour, although her life with him had not been a bright one; for this new position was no sinecure. The Revisor had never been inclined to curtail his own wants for the sake of his duties as husband and father. Tobacco and snuff, as well as his evening glass of beer in a respectable inn, took away an overwhelming proportion of their small income. Three daughters grew up; but the income did not increase at the same time—a circumstance which the Revisor had not reckoned upon, as he had married his wife simply for the sake of saving the salary of a servant. But his wife remained resolute under all circumstances. She worked at the School of Industry; she undertook commissions from the clergymen's wives, receiving from them little gifts of butter, eggs, etc.; she found ways and means of accommodating a poor gymnast in her small lodgings, and, in spite of the cheap terms and abundant living, to make a profit out of him. Her eldest daughter, Minnie—a ruling, practical nature like herself—received a good education in cooking and needle-work. The two younger, who were more talented, were placed in a good young ladies' school of the second rank; and still the practical woman succeeded in preserving her husband's very moderate capital untouched until his death.

Even after this sad event the resolute spirit soon regained its sway. "We must begin to do something," she said to one of her acquaintances. "The pension and interest will not be sufficient; needlework and knitting do not bring in much. We must see what can be done in order not to entrench upon the capital."

"Keep a boarding-house," proposed Frau Registrator Metzger, with a sly smile, "for young merchants, and single government officials; who knows what that may bring?—so many have already—"

"That will never do, friend," said Frau Riederich, decidedly; "that will lead to nothing substantial in the present state of things. A penniless girl who gets married is as rare as a white stag. I have decided otherwise. Eliza is the cleverest and best-looking of the girls; the principal of the College will find her a situation as governess. Nancy is delicate; and Minnie is not good-looking. They will not find husbands. But Nancy has learnt French, and Minnie can cook and sew well; so I shall try to keep them at home, and set up a boarding-school. That will not bring in much, but it may easily support us; and the girls can earn something for themselves besides."

So it came to pass. Eliza, a pretty, active girl, found a situation as governess. She certainly understood very little of the various branches of education which she would have to teach; but she had inherited something of her mother's resolute disposition, and hoped to fight her way through the world. The gymnast was dismissed; and in the same house where it had been a

work of art to find room for the family, four young ladies were accommodated. It was as great a triumph of ingenuity as the spirals in thick glass—no one can imagine how they got there; but there they are!

Notwithstanding all that Mary had heard and read of the enticing glitter, and of all the dangers of a life in the capital, she knew nothing about either.

Frau Riederich, with her three daughters and four pupils, lived in the fourth storey of a clean house in a respectable street, in which the grass grew. The sound of footsteps was but seldom heard, and the tramp of horses' feet never sounded, excepting when the doctor once drove past with the old Councillor of the Archives.

The country child felt very lonely up there, particularly on quiet Sundays, when the other girls had gone out to visit their friends and relations. She knew not a single person in the town, and she preferred staying at home, excepting when Frau Riederich and her pupils took a walk into the park, or made an excursion to the dairy in the neighbouring village.

On working days, Mary had a busy life; she was fond of needlework, and had quick, dexterous fingers, but found it difficult to become as expert as the other girls, who had had more practice. So she was often busy with her needle at the window of her little room while the others were still sleeping. The little room at the back of the house looked down on a great quadrangle, with houses round it, in the middle of which lay a melancholy sunless garden; a few flowers grew out of the shady ground, and at the back was a honeysuckle bower thickly covered with leaves, and overgrown like "Dornröschen's" castle; and in the middle was an artificial mound of tufa, between the crevices of which sprouted a few scanty flowers, and on the summit of which stood an aloe in an old stone vase.

Mary did not know how the garden got there, or to whom it belonged, and she had never made any inquiries about it, or even seen a soul there; but there was a peculiar charm in looking down into it, and she often imagined that the twisted sprays of the bower might suddenly open out, and some beloved and well-known form emerge from them; I do not know whether she said to herself who it might be. Mary had the honest wish to wait, in accordance with her mother's advice, not only for her bride's dress and wreath—that was a matter of course—but also in heart and thought.

And Mary had too much to do to spend much time in dreaming. She had to learn her French lessons, which were often extremely irksome. She was taking lessons from a M. Mercier, a former teacher of languages; and, before she was aware, seven o'clock struck, and she was called down to coffee. Miss Minnie presided at the breakfast table, and punctually at seven o'clock poured out coffee with syrup and bluish milk for present and absent alike, and those who came late were consoled by the ever-recurring remark that cold coffee conduces to beauty.

Then followed the lesson in needlework. In the morning fine sewing and stitching, in which instruction was given by a lady who had once seen better days, and who was chiefly resorted to by the young ladies of the town. Here new clothes and old-fashioned bonnets were mercilessly ridiculed and criticised, and the theatre and concerts discussed; the conversation extended even to the court—as a young lady came to the class whose aunt was the bosom friend of a court lady.

In this circle the shy country child was nervous and unhappy; she never looked up from her work, stitching away with an almost convulsive energy, and none

of the young ladies made any attempt to approach her. "A miller's child," said one of them, in a rather depreciating tone. It was natural that no one should desire any intercourse with her. Young people seldom consider, and are often unfeeling.

But in the afternoon they went to the school of dress-making, where good-natured Frau Kern presided. Even a life of trouble had not made her forget that she had once been young, and she rejoiced in the company of the young people who came from all parts of the country to the capital city, to learn dressmaking, ironing, and deportment.

There the needles flew busily, and there were races as to who should finish first; and yet more busily flowed the laughing and chattering, until at last Frau Kern's good-natured voice interposed, in warning tones, "Do not make such a noise; there will be no work done if you talk so much."

"Oh, Frau Kern, do you not know—"

"When merry words are heard around,
Then faster flows the stream of work?"

cried a saucy little voice; and, amid loud laughter, the needles worked all the faster, to belie the teacher's warning. Then much was related and discussed about the different neighbourhoods and circles from which the children came; for here the different classes were more mixed, and their teacher showed such a friendly interest in all that no haughty condescension to "the miller's child" chilled Mary's warm heart.

They sang and played as far as the work allowed; and when Frau Kern was heard to say, "Now be quiet for a little," a silent hour succeeded. Whoever unnecessarily broke the silence had to pay a forfeit of one kreutzer (one-third of a penny); and when enough money was collected, this "talking fund" came into use for an excursion for the whole party.

The time in the school of needlework was a pleasant one. The house stood in a part of the town not yet entirely built upon, and was blessed with fresh air, green trees, and the song of birds; and the green vineyards which surrounded the town looked in upon them.

Then Mary's heart grew warm, and she forgot her longing for home. Good Frau Kern had quite won her heart, and when she went into the little room with her to try on her clothes, the good woman spoke to her in such a kind, motherly way, gave her such good advice in all her difficulties, and showed such a hearty interest in her life, and in that of all her friends, that at last, with deep blushes, Mary half-and-half confessed to her that she was almost engaged, but that no one was to hear of it yet. "Now, you are so young, Mary," said the kind woman, "all kinds of things may happen first. You must gather together a good dowry for yourself; a pious heart, good and pure thoughts, industry and activity; then, in any case, your future home will be a happy one."

The dressmaking certainly occupies a subordinate rank in the prospectus of educational establishments in the town, and Frau Kern was by no means a highly-educated woman; yet here Mary's eyes were opened to life and the world; here alone she felt at home, and young and cheerful. A cultivated heart and a kind spirit spread around them a cheerful atmosphere of life, wherever they may bear rule; and many thankful, happy memories of youthful days rest in the bare room where the floor was covered with patches of varied dye, and where the old piano was only used to cut out clothes upon.

M. Mercier, the French master, did not make his

lessons very difficult to himself. "Conversation is the first thing," he often repeated, and let his pupils say two verbs and a fable of La Fontaine; and as these were never remembered, the lesson was always the same.

"The nightingale had sung
All the summer long."

lasted out the whole summer; and then M. Mercier began the conversation, and told stories about his family, his "patrie," and talked of all kinds of things; he often asked conscientiously whether they understood him. "Un peu, monsieur" ("A little, sir"), answered Mary, very shyly; because she did not know what "nothing" was in French. "That is right," said M. Mercier, much pleased; "that is enough for a beginning; conversation is the principal thing."

Mary's progress in music was not very brilliant either, although she and her mistress tormented each other grievously with finger exercises, and a sonata of Herz; but her charming voice improved under good instruction. Music and French had been prescribed by Frau Rau. Mary was sorry that she did not make more progress in them, but she hoped that George would not care so much about it at last.

WILD ELEPHANTS.*

WHETHER the elephant of Ceylon is a different species from that of India is a moot point among naturalists. Dr. Falconer, a high authority, thinks they are one species; Sir Emerson Tennent is inclined to the negative. In all such discussions a previous understanding as to what constitutes specific difference would save much idle controversy. However this may be, Sir Emerson Tennent, who has already thrown so much light on the zoology of Ceylon, has, in the present interesting and exhaustive monograph, given a most complete view of the natural history of the wild elephant as observed in that island. Of the lively and attractive style of the book the following extract gives sufficient proof:—

"If by any accident an elephant becomes hopelessly separated from his own herd, he is not permitted to attach himself to any other. He may browse in their vicinity, or resort to the same places to drink and to bathe; but the intercourse is only on a distant and conventional footing, and no familiarity or intimate association is under any circumstances permitted. To such a height is this exclusiveness carried, that even amidst the terror and stupefaction of an elephant corral, when an individual, detached from his own party in the *mêlée* and confusion, has been driven into the enclosure along with an unbroken herd, I have seen him repulsed in every attempt to take refuge among them, and driven off by heavy blows with their trunks as often as he attempted to insinuate himself within the circle which they had formed for their own security. There can be no reasonable doubt that this jealous and exclusive policy not only contributes to produce, but mainly serves to perpetuate, the class of solitary elephants which are known by the term *goondahs*, in India, and which from their vicious propensities and predatory habits are called *hora*, or *rogues*, in Ceylon.

"It is believed by the Singhalese that these are either individuals who by accident have lost their former associates and become morose and savage from rage and

solitude, or else that being naturally vicious they have become daring from the yielding habits of their milder companions, and eventually separated themselves from the rest of the herd which had refused to associate with them. Another conjecture is, that being almost universally males, the death or capture of particular females may have detached them from their former companions in search of fresh alliances. It is also believed that a tame elephant escaping from activity, unable to rejoin its former herd, and excluded from any other, becomes a 'rogue' from necessity. In Ceylon it is generally believed that the *rogues* are all males (but of this I am not certain), and so sullen is their disposition that, although two may be in the same vicinity, there is no known instance of two *rogues* associating, or of a *rogue* being seen in company with another elephant.

"They spend their nights in marauding, often around the dwellings of men, destroying plantations, trampling down gardens, and committing serious ravages in rice grounds and young cocoa-nut plantations. Hence, from their closer contact with man and his dwellings, these outcasts become disabused of many of the terrors which render the ordinary elephant timid and needlessly cautious; they break through fences without fear; and even in the daylight a *rogue* has been known near Ambogamoa to watch a field of labourers at work in reaping rice, and boldly to walk in amongst them, seize a sheaf from the heap, and retire with it leisurely to the jungle. By day they generally seek concealment, but are frequently to be met with prowling about the by-roads and jungle paths, where travellers are exposed to the utmost risk from their assaults. It is probable that this hostility to man is the result of the enmity engendered by measures which the natives, who dread their visits, adopt for the protection of the growing crops.

"To return to the herd: one member of it, usually the largest and most powerful, is by common consent implicitly followed as leader. A tusker, if there be one in the party, is generally observed to be the commander; but a female, if of superior energy, is as readily obeyed as a male. In fact, in this promotion there is no reason to doubt that supremacy is almost unconsciously assumed by those endowed with superior vigour and courage rather than from the accidental possession of greater bodily strength; and the devotion and loyalty which the herd evince to their leader are very remarkable. This is more readily seen in the case of a tusker than any other, because in a herd he is generally the object of the keenest pursuit by the hunters. On such occasions the others do their utmost to protect him from danger: when driven to extremity they place their leader in the centre and crowd so eagerly in front of him that the sportsmen have to shoot a number which they might otherwise have spared. In one instance a tusker, which was badly wounded by Major Rogers, was promptly surrounded by his companions, who supported him between their shoulders, and actually succeeded in covering his retreat to the forest.

"Those who have lived much in the jungle in Ceylon, and had constant opportunities of watching the habits of wild elephants, have witnessed instances of the submission of herds to their leaders that suggest an inquiry of singular interest as to the means adopted by the latter to communicate, with distinctness, orders which are observed with the most implicit obedience by their followers. The following narrative of an adventure in the great central forest toward the north of the island, communicated to me by Major Skinner, who was engaged for some time in surveying and opening roads through the thickly-wooded districts there, will serve better than

* "The Wild Elephant, and the Method of Capturing and Taming it in Ceylon." By Sir J. Emerson Tennent, Bart., F.R.S. Longmans.

any abstract description to convey an idea of the conduct of a herd on such occasions:—

“The case you refer to struck me as exhibiting something more than ordinary brute instinct, and approached nearer to reasoning powers than any other instance I can now remember. I cannot do justice to the scene, although it appeared to me at the time to be so remarkable that it left a deep impression in my mind.

“In the height of the dry season in Neuera-Kalawa, you know the streams are all dried up, and the tanks nearly so. All animals are then sorely pressed for water, and they congregate in the vicinity of those tanks.

“During one of those seasons I was encamped on the bund or embankment of a very small tank, the water in which was so dried that its surface could not have exceeded an area of 500 square yards. It was the only pond within many miles, and I knew that of necessity a very large herd of elephants, which had been in the neighbourhood all day, must resort to it at night.

“On the lower side of the tank, and in a line with the embankment, was a thick forest, in which the elephants sheltered themselves during the day. On the upper side and all around the tank there was a considerable margin of open ground. It was one of those beautiful bright, clear, moonlight nights, when objects could be seen almost as distinctly as by day, and I determined to avail myself of the opportunity to observe the movements of the herd, which had already manifested some uneasiness at our presence. The locality was very favourable for my purpose, and an enormous tree projecting over the tank afforded me a secure lodgment in its branches. Having ordered the fires of my camp to be extinguished at an early hour, and all my followers to retire to rest, I took up my post of observation on the overhanging bough; but I had to remain for upwards of two hours before anything was to be seen or heard of the elephants, although I knew they were within 500 yards of me. At length, about the distance of 300 yards from the water, an unusually large elephant issued from the dense cover, and advanced cautiously across the open ground to within 100 yards of the tank, where he stood perfectly motionless. So quiet had the elephants become (although they had been roaring and breaking the jungle throughout the day and evening), that not a movement was now to be heard. The huge vidette remained in his position, still as a rock, for a few minutes, and then made three successive stealthy advances of several yards (halting for some minutes between each, with ears bent forward to catch the slightest sound), and in this way he moved slowly up to the water's edge. Still he did not venture to quench his thirst, for, though his fore feet were partially in the tank and his vast body reflected clear in the water, he remained for some minutes listening in perfect stillness. Not a motion could be perceived in himself or his shadow. He returned cautiously and slowly to the position he had at first taken up on emerging from the forest. Here in a little while he was joined by five others, with which he again proceeded as cautiously, but less slowly than before, to within a few yards of the tank, and then posted his patrols. He then re-entered the forest and collected around him the whole herd, which must have amounted to between eighty and one hundred individuals—led them across the open ground with the most extraordinary composure and quietness, till he joined the advanced guard, when he left them for a moment and repeated his former reconnaissance at the edge of the tank. After which, having apparently satisfied himself that all was safe, he returned and obviously gave the order to advance, for in a moment the whole herd rushed into the water with a degree of

unreserved confidence, so opposite to the caution and timidity which had marked their previous movements, that nothing will ever persuade me that there was not rational and preconcerted co-operation throughout the whole party, and a degree of responsible authority exercised by the patriarch leader.

“When the poor animals had gained possession of the tank (the leader being the last to enter), they seemed to abandon themselves to enjoyment without restraint or apprehension of danger. Such a mass of animal life I had never before seen huddled together in so narrow a space. It seemed to me as though they would have nearly drunk the tank dry. I watched them with great interest until they had satisfied themselves as well in bathing as in drinking, when I tried how small a noise would apprise them of the proximity of unwelcome neighbours. I had but to break a little twig, and the solid mass instantly took to flight like a herd of frightened deer, each of the smaller calves being apparently shouldered and carried along between two of the older ones.”

Poetry.

THE ROSE.

I PLANTED A ROSE in my garden—

A tiny and tender thing—
But it stood through the snows of the winter,
And woke into life in the spring.

First, buds at the ends of the branches—

Brown buds that were scarcely seen;
But they swelled in the days of the summer,
And opened to leaves of green.

Then it grew from the ground to my window,

Strong from the earth out-born,
Clothing itself in red blossoms,
And armed on its stem with the thorn.

The trailing rose at my window

Bloomed the long summer through;
All the day it was warm with sunshine,
All the night it was wet with dew.

And it bore such a wealth of roses,
Globed into fragrance sweet;
But in autumn, alas! all the petals
Dropt on the path at my feet.

Our Life, like the planted rose, is planted

Here on the earth to grow;
And God, who cares for the roses,
Cares for our lives also.

The infant lies in the nurse-lap,

Feeble with moaning cries;
And it turns to surrounding objects
Its wondering, innocent eyes.

But soon come the buds of reason,
The quickenings of love and of hope,
And home is too small a measure
To yield to its thoughts a scope.

Then away in its grasp of Nature
Stretches the mind of the man;
And he searches the planets' secret,
And opens the world's great plan.

But to sweetness of varied knowledge
Is added a thorny pain,
And the hand that is filled with power
Is torn to its deepest vein.

And the hopes, and the joys, and the gladness
Fail as the roses fleet,
And drop all their promised bounty
Dead on the path at our feet.

But let Life with its red heart-blossom
Of love be trained for the sky:
It shall live though the roses wither,
And bloom though the roses die.

A. N.